

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTIAGO 1996

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR CPRS OTRA AR CI

SUBJECT: ACCREDITATION OF JOURNALISTS FOR OAS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
MEETING

1. DURING COURTESY CALL ON NEW HEAD OF GOC OFFICE OF SOCIAL COMMUNICATIONS (DINACS) MAR 10, BY PAO AND INFORMATION OFFICERS USIS GIVEN GROUND RULES FOR ACCREDITATION OF JOURNALISTS TO JUNE OAS GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETING IN SANTIAGO.

2. DINACS DIRECTOR COL GASTON ZUNIGA AND HIS ASSISTANT GASTRON ACUNA, DIRECTOR OF GOVERNMENT INFORMATION OFFICE (NOW A PART OF DINACS) SAID OAS IN CHARGE OF ISSUING CREDENTIALS FOR MEETING. THEY SAID CHILE WOULD ADMIT ANY JOURNALIST ACCREDITED BY OAS, SPECIFICALLY INCLUDING JOURNALISTS NOW BANNED FROM CHILE, SUCH AS JOANNE OMANG, JUAN DE ONIS AND RUDY RAUCH.

3. DINACS OFFICIALS MADE IT CLEAR, HOWEVER, THAT TO REPORT ON MATTERS OTHER THAN OAS MEETING, JOURNALISTS MUST OBTAIN CREDENTIALS FROM GOC FOREIGN PRESS OFFICE. JOURNALISTS NOW ON "BLACK LIST" WOULD NOT RECEIVE SUCH CREDENTIALS. INDICATED JOURNALISTS' CONDUCT DURING OAS MEETING WOULD HAVE BEARING ON FUTURE ABILITY TO ENTER COUNTRY FOR NON-OAS REPORTING. "IF THEY WANT TO REDEEM PAST BEHAVIOR, WE'RE WILLING TO FIND OUT," SAID ACUNA.

4. DINACS OFFICIALS STRESSED CORRESPONDENT BANNINGS WERE AGAINST PARTICULAR INDIVIDUALS, NOT AGAINST PRESS ENTITY, WHICH ALLOWED
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SEND OTHER CORRESPONDENTS INTO CHILE. GOC HAS LONG MEMORY: ACUNA

BLAMED RAUCH BANNING ON 1974 "TIME" ARTICLES.

5. UNDER NEW GOC INFORMATION REORGANIZATION, OFFICIALS SAID, DINACS NOW SOLE GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN, SUPERVISING ALL GOC COMMUNICATIONS OFFICES. CLAIMED DINACS ITSELF DETERMINES WHETHER FOREIGN CORRESPONDENT SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO ENTER CHILE, AND MINISTRY OF INTERIOR CARRIES OUT BANNING ORDER.

6. COMMENT: DINACS CLAIM THAT MINISTRY OF INTERIOR HAS NO SAY IN ACTUAL BANNING OF CORRESPONDENTS CONTRADICTS APPARENT SEQUENCE OF EVENTS IN RAUCH CASE WHEN DINACS FOREIGN PRESS OFFICE TOLD USIS RAUCH COULD ENTER CHILE WHILE INTERIOR MINISTRY WAS INFORMING RAUCH DIRECTLY THAT HE WAS BANNED.

7. DESPITE OFFICIALS' POLITE ATTENTION TO USIS OFFICERS' DEFENSE OF FREEDOM OF PRESS, ZUNIGA, ACUNA ADAMANT IN INSISTENCE THAT CHILE MUST BAN FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS WHO DO NOT ENGAGE IN "BALANCED" REPORTING, AND SHOW NO SIGN OF EASING HARD LINE IN THIS AREA.
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